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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

DPC 179

TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS AND RADIO NEWS BRIEFING, THURSDAY,  
AUGUST 30, 1962, 12:30 P.M.

MR. REAP: Well, we have several press releases for you. The first one is 529, the text of a statement by Judge Hastie on his departure for the ceremonies and the establishment of independence of Trinidad and Tobago. This statement he made yesterday afternoon at the airport. [See Press Release No. 529]

Earlier this morning we gave you the speech by Mennen Williams before the Jewish War Veterans out in Detroit. [See Press Release No. 528.]

And you also should have Press Release No. 530, which concerns an exchange of notes between this Government and Italy on textiles. We have Mr. Hugh W. Wolff from our Office of International Resources here who is, I understand, pressed a bit. So if you have questions about the Italian textiles, Mr. Wolff.

Q Well, just one question. What has been the level in the calendar of these exports?

MR. WOLFF: The previous level was a little bit lower than the new level of 1.5 million. The previous level was 1.375. So that the new level represents an increase of about 9 percent.

Q Well, we endorsed it now.

MR. REAP: We have endorsed it.

Q Oh.

MR. REAP: There was a statement last Saturday.

Q I read several newspapers during this period and I didn't see a word in them.

MR. REAP: I wish you wouldn't knock vacations. I like them.

Q Can you say anything about Mr. Clay's visit with the Secretary?

MR. REAP: Just that he came in here to be brought up to date on current developments in Berlin.

Q Has the President's reply to Prince Sihanouk gone forward, do you know?

MR. REAP: I don't know.

Q Joe, the President yesterday at his news conference mentioned consultations with NATO countries on the question of ships under flags of NATO countries carrying goods from Russia to Cuba. Can you elaborate on this? When were these consultations, with whom and what are we asking the NATO countries to do about this, if anything? What's our policy?

MR. REAP: Well, from time to time we have discussed the problem of Cuba with our NATO allies. I'd rather not go

into detail of what we have asked them to do or not to do. You have in mind the shipping, and let me say on background that is a very complex problem. For instance, the chartering of ships, as I understand there is a surplus of shipping in the world, and if the Russians chartered some, say, from Poland as opposed to a NATO ally, the end result would be just about the same in that the Poles would then be in a position to go out and charter. It's a very difficult thing to say on---

I have no information which of the NATO allies are chartering their ships to the Soviet Union nor do I have any information what they are carrying. But I think you are aware that some NATO members shipping has carried oil to Cuba.

Q Well, Joe, as you know, this issue was raised with our NATO allies shortly after the time that we suspended trade with Cuba. That is a good while ago. Has any of our NATO allies agreed to take action to prevent their ships from operating in this trade so far?

MR. REAP: I can't answer that for you.

Q Do you know whether any of these ships are actually American ships which have fled to a foreign flag, say Panama, or some such thing as this?

MR. REAP: No. I don't know that.

Q Joe, is there any embargo against American ships sailing to Cuba?

MR. REAP: I don't know whether we do have that or not. You do know that, while we have cut off trade with Cuba, it is permitted that the Cubans buy from us foodstuffs and medicines. That hasn't changed. Whether that is being shipped there in American bottoms, I just don't know.

Q Joe, why can't you tell us--

MR. REAP: I think we can find that out for you.

Q Is there any restriction on American ships being chartered--

MR. REAP: That is the question I have no answer to.

Q --for carrying cargo from some other point in the world to Cuba?

MR. REAP: I don't know the answer to that. I think I can find that out.

Q Joe, why can't you answer Mike's question? Because you don't know, or are not permitted to?

MR. REAP: If it will make Mike feel more comfortable, I will simply change it to "No comment".

Q I'm not very comfortable either way. I do think that it has been agreed, publicly by the President yesterday saying we are trying to discourage these countries. We ought to be able to get a little more information than we have so far this morning.

MR. REAP: I still say "No comment".

Q Joe, as a practical matter, is it possible--

Q Why can't you tell us the names of any of these countries that are permitting their ships to be chartered, Joe? What's so secret about that?

MR. REAP: No comment.

Q Joe, just as a practical matter and speaking generally, is it possible for a democratic country to order its shipowners not to do certain things, to ship to certain places, in the absence of a war?

MR. REAP: No. No, Howard, I'm not going to get into that.

Q What about the--

MR. REAP: There are a hundred and some nations around the world with a hundred and some different sets of laws. I'm even reluctant to interpret our own.

Q What about the United States? Could we do it?

MR. REAP: I would prefer you ask the Maritime Commission that.

Q Could you tell us, please, whether there there has been a very recent step, and not just consultations from time to time, something which happened very recently in this matter?

MR. REAP: No, I can't be specific on that.

Q You know, Joe, the absence of any specific

information on this is very puzzling, due to the fact that the President did talk about it at his news conference.

MR. REAP: Thank you.

Q Joe, has there been any contact on this subject since Mr. Rostow's visit with the NATO Council some months ago?

MR. REAP: I didn't hear the first.

Q Has there been any further official approach by this Government to the NATO countries since the Rostow visit to Paris?

MR. REAP: I'm sure there has been, but I can't give you any dates or times on this.

Q Well, to put it a little more specifically, has there been any new representation in light of the disclosure from Moscow the day before yesterday?

MR. REAP: I don't know whether there has been or not, but it is safe for you to assume that there will be.

Q Thank you, Joe.

[Whereupon, at 12:43 p.m. the press briefing was closed.]